

ECO\UNECE\IRU/IsDB Capacity Building Workshop

Promote implementation of Annex 11 of TIR Convention on eTIR in the
ECO region and beyond - Interconnection of National Customs Systems
with the eTIR International System

Report

April 14, 2021

Prepared by Transport and Communications Directorate

ECO/UNECE/IRU/IsDB Capacity Building Workshop

Promote implementation of Annex 11 of TIR Convention on eTIR in the ECO region and beyond - Interconnection of National Customs Systems with the eTIR International System

The Capacity Building Workshop on Promoting the implementation of Annex 11 of TIR Convention on e-TIR in the ECO region and beyond - Interconnection of National Customs System with the e-TIR International System, was held virtually on April 14, 2021. The workshop was held in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), International Road Union (IRU) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The aim of the workshop was to familiarize the experts of the concerned national authorities and the transport operators, on the main TIR objectives, principles, and pillars as well as key provisions and governance, and to discuss the status of the implementation of the TIR and eTIR in the region and its main challenges and technicalities to implement eTIR. The event was attended by delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Kazakhstan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the representatives of UNECE and IsDB and ECO Secretariat. List of the participants is attached as **Annex-I**.

Opening of the Workshop

2. Mr. Akbar Khodaei, Director (Transport and Communication) of ECO Secretariat, delivered an inaugural statement. He welcomed the participants and appreciated the UNECE, IRU and IsDB for their contributions to this important event. The Director stated that the eTIR system brings additional security and risk management opportunities to TIR operations and allows member states to reduce their administrative burden while maximizing the benefits of integrated supply chain management. He further expressed hope that the use of fully digital TIR processes can result in a paperless TIR System which in turn will result in international trade facilitation and security among our Member States and beyond. He also further mentioned the mandate of the ECO secretariat to promote digitalization of transport documents to mitigate the risks arising from COVID 19 pandemic.

3. The Chair of the TIR Executive Board (TIREXB) Mr. Marco Ciampi welcomed all the distinguished participants in this important event. He stated that for promoting and accelerating of TIR implementation into ECO region and beyond, the eTIR system is the beginning of new era. He emphasized that it is necessary for TIR contracting parties in their capacity to opt the procedure at the earliest possible and complete the formalities to implement the TIR procedure in the electronic format. He supported the application of TIR convention and also supports the training of personnel of custom authorities of interested parties who are willing in TIR procedure. He expressed his confidence in achieving progress in implementation of e-TIR in the ECO region.

4. In his statement the Director of the Sustainable Transport Division, United Nations Economic Commissions for Europe (UNECE), Mr. Yuwei Li welcomed the participants and thanked ECO and IDB for their long-standing partnership and cooperation with UNECE. The Director stated that since its creation in 1947, UNECE Transport has provided a framework for intergovernmental cooperation in order to ensure safety of inland transport and facilitate international transport while improving its sustainability and environmental performance.

5. Highlighting the importance of the TIR system, he stated that in the digital world today, TIR is evolved to an electronic version to keep pace with the latest technology, which is e-TIR International System. The e-TIR International System will not only provide a facilitated procedure for transport

companies but will also further secure the TIR system for the benefit of all customs authorities and transporters. In addition, it will make the TIR system more competitive and efficient, since all customs authorities involved in an e-TIR transport along a given itinerary will be informed in advance, electronically and in a matter of seconds, through the dispatch of the advance TIR data by a TIR transporter, about an upcoming TIR declaration. He expressed hope that ECO Member States may take a lead in practical application of the e-TIR International System.

1st Session: e-TIR Conceptual, Functional and Technical specifications

6. Mr. Konstantinos Alexopoulos, Chief of the Transport Facilitation and Economics section of the UNECE explained the eTIR system offers benefits to all stakeholders involved in the TIR system. He stated that the e-TIR international system aims to ensure secure exchange of data between national customs systems related to the international transit of goods, vehicles or containers according to the provisions of the TIR Convention and to allow Customs to manage the data on guarantees, issued by guarantee chains to holders authorized to use the TIR system (Customs to Customs). It brings additional security and risk management opportunities, thus reducing the risk of fraud. Second, advanced international cooperation will allow all actors to significantly reduce their administrative burden and to maximize the benefits of integrated supply chain management. Finally, the provision of advance cargo information and the exchange of information in real time will speed up the TIR procedure.

7. Mr. Andre Sceia, eTIR Interconnections coordinator made presentation on eTIR conceptual, functional and technical specifications and briefed about the eTIR major milestones, ECE intergovernmental bodies roles about eTIR, connection to the eTIR, eTIR specifications architecture overview and eTIR messages. Copy of presentation is attached.

8. Mr. Sébastien GALTIER, eTIR Information Technology expert made presentation and briefed on the interconnection projects and objectives of interconnection project for customs and stated that each contracting party bound by Annex 11 has to connect its national customs systems with the eTIR international system. He stated that the ECE will assist countries in connecting their customs systems to the eTIR international system, including by means of conformance tests to ensure their proper functioning prior to the operational connection. Copy of presentation is attached.

2nd Session: Interconnection Projects

9. During the countries intervention, the representative from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan stated that the Ministry of Transport of Afghanistan is determined to activate and implement the eTIR system in Afghanistan and considers its implementation as one of its most important goals, so it has used all its practical actions to implement this system. The leadership of the Ministry of Transport, as the focal point of the TIR system in the country, supports the implementation and operation of e-TIR International system and considers it as one of the important priorities of this department in the field of TIR system implementation. “At the moment we have not the soft and hard infrastructure for implementation of e-TIR, despite our interest to make it happen at the soonest possible time. It would be quit logical, if the competent authorities along with e-TIR International system receive the transmitted data simultaneously. In this case if the competent authorities confirm the declaration, the e-TIR international system should automatically confirm the receipt of declaration. Some further clarification should be given on UNECE’s support of the countries technically and financially. To this end, we do agree and support the implementation of e-TIR globally, especially in our country, this could result in further smooth handling of the trade and transport in our country. Capacity building is very important for us to implement e-TIR in Afghanistan.”

10. The representative from the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan made presentation on the interconnection of the electronic customs system of Azerbaijan with eTIR international system. He stated that the Azerbaijan is in the first phase of project and is analyzing the activity diagrams, sequence diagrams and data analysis detailed in the eTIR specifications and liaise with subject matter experts from customs to design the changes required in the business process of the national customs systems to adapt it with the eTIR procedure. Copy of presentation is attached.
11. Mr. Mostafa Ayati from the Islamic Republic of Iran made presentation on digitalization and e-TIR status in Islamic Republic of Iran and stated that after implementing TIR system, Iran custom initiated eTIR pilot project with turkey in 2014 with the help of UNECE and IRU. This pilot project was appreciated by the all stakeholders. After successfully project with Republic of Turkey, the Iran custom authorities initiated first phase of digital project with Republic of Azerbaijan and both countries intend to expand eTIR throughout the International North-South Corridor. Copy of presentation is attached. He further stated that eTIR system will also be implemented in Chabahar port and requested UNECE Support in this regard. Copy of his presentation is enclosed.
12. The representative of Republic of Kazakhstan welcomed all the participants and appreciated the efforts of UNECE and ECO Secretariat for organizing this workshop. He stated that Kazakhstan is determined to activate and implement the eTIR system and considers its implementation as one of its most important goals. He fully supported the eTIR system for its implementation in the ECO Region. He stated that “we are in process and will be soon in a position to implement the eTIR system.
13. Mr. Rizwan Mahmood, Additional Director of Transit Trade Focal Person for eTIR Project, Islamic Republic of Pakistan made presentation and highlighted Pakistan's position and current status of the project. He stated that a Kick-off meeting was held with the UNECE team on 21.10.2020 wherein project methodology and technical overview of eTIR international system was discussed.
14. He further stated that in order to meet the documentation requirements for the national Customs system, two Change Request Forms (CRFs) have been prepared and forwarded to the team of Reforms & Automation. Further the Pakistan custom is preparing a System Requirement Specification (SRS) document, which prescribes each and every step required for developing the required changes in the software of Pakistan Customs computerized system. Copy of Presentation is attached.
15. The representatives from the Republic of Tajikistan supported the eTIR pilot project and stated that Republic of Tajikistan is ready to join this pilot project of digitalization and intend to expand transport corridor using eTIR. He further stated that “we are going to consider the issue of pilot project with all relevant authorities and we have active support from our custom authorities as well.”
16. Mr. Anil Senmanav, the representative of the Republic of Turkey made presentation on implementation of e-TIR in Turkey interconnection Project. He stated that the e-TIR allows the customs administrations to receive information prior to the presentation of the goods and eliminates the need of papers and allows submissions of documents without visiting the offices, which saves the time as well as money.
17. The representative from the Turkmen Association International Automotive Carriers of Turkmenistan (THADA) made presentation and stated that in March 2020, a temporary regulation was issued in Turkmenistan, according to which a contactless mode was introduced at the border of the cargo part of the vehicle to other tractors - when exporting to foreign ones, and when importing to Turkmen ones, which has led to a 17% decrease in international freight traffic in 2020 compared to 2019 and a decrease in the use of TIR Carnets. THADA and IRU are working closely with the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan on digitalization issues, in particular the integration of e-TIR into the national

ASYCUDA system, the use of TIR-EPD and other digital services. As part of the use of the TIR-EPD program, the entry of the necessary data into the online portal using Internet connections was studied. Work is underway to expand ASYCUDA modules - TIR-EPD connection.

18. Mr. Khakimov Elyor Ilhomjonovich, Chief Inspector of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan made presentation and stated that in 2007, a unified automated information system of the customs authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan was developed and since 2021 began to introduce tools for digitalization of the TIR procedure and in this direction the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan was also interested in pilot projects and signed a number of documents. He further stated that at the same time, on the basis of a five-year Memorandum of Understanding between the UNECE and the IRU, pilot TIR transports were organized using available digital tools. He informed that currently, the custom authorities of Uzbekistan is working on joining the International e-TIR System together with the support of the UNECE.

19. At the end of the workshop ECO and UNCECE, IRU and IsDB were highly appreciated and further requested to organize more workshops on the subject and familiarize the member States with technical specifications of the eTIR. Mr. Konstantinos Alexopoulos, Chief of the Transport Facilitation and Economics section of the UNECE also proposed technical and financial support of the UNECE to ECO member states to implement Annex 11 and joining eTIR international system.
